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Navigating the E-Society
Dynamics of Participation and Exclusion

Focus

- Everyday lives in the e-society
- How are people navigating their way around the emerging digital information, entertainment and communication environment created by:
    - Home computer
    - Mobile phones
    - Digital television
    - Games consoles

Navigating the E-Society

Dynamics of Participation and Exclusion

Key Issues

Exclusion

- Who is excluded from the emerging e-society and why?
- Why do people 'drop out' of the e-society or never want to join?
- What are the implications for citizenship and social participation?

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Key Issues

Participation

- How are digital technologies being used?
- How does use vary by social location, life stage and household organisation?
- How do people become more competent, confident and creative users?
- What economic, social and cultural resources support full participation?

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Key Arguments

Digital Divides

- Exclusion is not an either/or condition - it is a continuum
- Access is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for self directed use

Digital Careers

- Access is not a one off event. It launches user careers with multiple possible outcomes

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Key Arguments

Resources

- Access to material resources is not the only factor in play
- Social and cultural resources also play a central role

Social Resources

- Integration into social networks where digital communications technologies are used and valued
- Access to friends, family members, neighbours or colleagues who can provide practical help and support

Cultural Resources

- Competencies/digital literacies
- Identities
  - Feeling 'at home' in the new digital landscapes
  - The role of digital technologies in the construction and presentation of self

The Sample

93 households purposively selected to represent a range of:

- Income groups
- Ethnic groups
- Life stages
  - Children, teenagers, adults of working age, the elderly
- Localities
  - Rural/urban
- Household types
  - Those living alone, living with a partner, lone parents and families with children over 6 years of age

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The Research

- Longitudinal
  - Two waves a year apart
  - Very high retention rate

- Multi-method
  - Household inventories
  - Individual usage diaries
  - In-depth interviews
    - Children's photographs and design competition

- Children presented with picture and asked for:
  - Their responses to a scenario of one child not having a computer at home.
  - Their description of events

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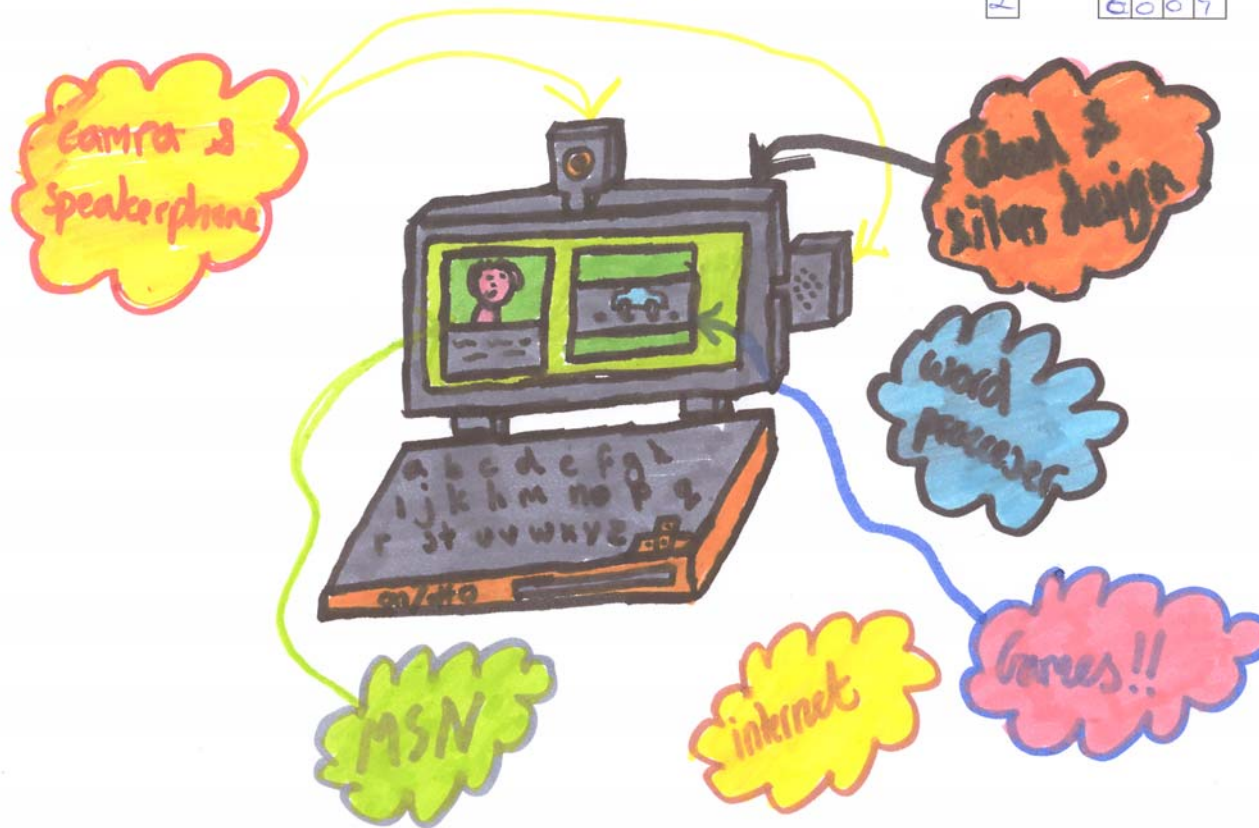
Implications

Joining up policy

- Would neighbourhood mentoring schemes be an effective way of boosting and extending home computer use?

- Should advertising and promotional materials for home computers and mobile phones offer more images of elderly users?